



Supporting Racialized Populations in LTC Spotlight Report

Prepared by: Sunita Lad, MSW

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Glossary of Terms

Racialization – The concept of racialization refers to the processes by which a group of people is defined by their “race.” The visible effects of processes of racialization are the racial inequalities embedded within social structures and systems.

Marginalized Populations – Are groups and communities that experience discrimination and exclusion (social, political, and economic) because of unequal power relationships across economic, political, social and cultural dimensions.

Cultural competency - defined as the ability to understand, appreciate, and interact with people from cultures or belief systems different from one's own

Introduction

The quality of care to one's health is important to an individual's overall wellbeing. With Canada's diverse population, considerations should be made on understanding the experiences of residents in long-term care homes (LTC) to ensure they have access to necessary supports that will help improve their quality of life. This report focuses on the gaps in the LTC homes that need to be acknowledged such as cultural resources and mental health resources for racialized and marginalized individuals. A study indicated that ethnocultural and immigrant populations require critical awareness on language concerns and cultural differences in long-term care homes as this had an impact on residents' quality of care (Scott et al., 2022). Additionally, having appropriate mental health diagnosis and resources are crucial to improving resident's care.

Cultural Awareness

While there may be services available for some LTC home residents who identify as a person of colour this is often limited due to where one's geographic location is within Ontario. Cultural representation or rituals is a part of ones identify which needs to be recognized in LTC homes. Through existing literature, we can understand how cultural food items are important for LTC residents to have. With a growing proportion of residents becoming ethnically diverse, reduced or lack of cultural competency can lead to health disparities (Syed, 2021). Research studies have indicated a correlation between provider-resident communication which is directly linked to resident satisfaction and health outcomes (Syed, 2021). Thus, this is a great opportunity to focus on understanding and introducing areas within the LTC homes that will be supportive towards culturally diverse residents.

Recommendations & Suggestions:

1. Cultural competency - Be used as an educational strategy tool.
2. Organizational level to be considered – Implementing changes in policy making, administration, and strategic planning to include within mission statements. Include trainings for staff members on how to care for individuals from a different background. Also ask staff members what type of support they would need.
3. Leadership – Senior management has to reinforce the importance of cultural diversity in LTC homes.
4. Getting to know residents – Meet with their caregivers, speak to the residents themselves, take the initiative to learn more about their cultural needs.
5. Creating a cultural supportive space – Ensure the LTC home is welcoming and creates a home environment.
6. Cultural Language – If possible, try to speak the language the resident speaks or get another staff member to help.

Mental Health Awareness

Existing literature on mental health resources for culturally diverse and marginalized residents in LTC homes are very limited. With the lack of literature on this topic, we are missing out on the voices of the residents in LTC and therefore we are unable to bring awareness and make the necessary changes in LTC homes. This is primarily due to the stigma on mental health concerns within ethnographic cultures. A study indicated that work needs to be done with understanding and addressing cultural and system-level barriers surrounding the unmet needs and to identify culturally appropriate clinical supports and practices to ensure mental health care is available (Chiu et al., 2018). This is an opportunity to analyze existing LTC homes and see how we can advocate for changes by including mental health supports.

Recommendations/Suggestions:

1. Training on mental health services – For staff members to understand how to communicate with caregivers and residents who are from culturally diverse backgrounds.
2. Definitions on posters – promoting mental health services/resources in a positive manner to educate residents, caregivers, and staff. Defining what mental health means.
3. Communication – Understanding what mental health means to residents or caregivers.
4. Improving lifestyle and social support – Health care providers and family can provide psychosocial support for long-term care residents. This type of support can help improve older adults' mood and behaviour.

Results from the project

The idea is to understand the experiences from racialized and marginalized caregivers on a family/friend living in a LTC home. We created a survey with questions that help us to understand their experiences, in particular to cultural and mental health resources as well as having input from caregivers and residents' perspectives of recommendations needed in the LTC homes. We received a total of 7 surveys and from that information, 5/7 caregivers reported some recommendations for better support. Additionally, 6/7 caregivers were not aware of any mental health resources at the LTC homes. Lastly, 50 % had someone living in a private long-term care home and 50% had someone living in a public long-term care home.

Recommendations from respondents:

1. To have a social worker who can help navigate services such as bereavement support, palliative support, recognition of cultural background and providing wellness support for both residents and their families.
2. Ensuring that rooms have air-condition during the warmer months.
3. Have a variety of food options to provide residents with more options and include more activities for residents.
4. Have essential caregivers be accepted as part of the care team.
5. Activities/services are more geared towards western traditions such as themed celebrations, songs and food items lack cultural variation.
6. More updated programs as well as better options for food.
7. Including cultural services and mental health support/counselling is needed.
8. To have participation in cultural services.

Best Practices for Family Councils

A Family Council is a group of family members and friends of the residents of a long-term care home who gather together for peer support, education, and to improve the experiences of all people long-term care.

This is a great opportunity for family members and friends to work together to identify the challenges both themselves and resident members living in the LTC home face. Most importantly, new dialogues can form and creating awareness will showcase the importance of the changes that need to be implemented pertaining to both cultural and mental health services.

Critical Reflection

This report is intended to provide awareness on an ongoing concern and to start critically reflecting on long-term care homes. At some point during our life, we will most likely know someone who is a resident in a LTC home and we must feel confident in knowing that services are available. A great starting point is to collect more data on the experiences of caregivers and residents as well as to complete a program evaluation for LTC homes to answer questions about what is working well, what services are available and what trainings are available to staff members.

This is an opportunity for all of us to engage in some critical reflection. Here are some questions to consider.

1. Is your long-term care home that your family/friend resides in providing these services?
If yes – how. If no – what can be done?
2. How can you be involved in creating awareness on this topic?
3. Look at your LTC home and see if they provide cultural and mental health services?
(This can also be observed by looking at the websites of the closest LTC home in your area)

References

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